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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Students Shut Down Sexist Policy

BROOKLYN, June 1—Hundreds of students — female and male, Black and white — are uniting to build a movement to fight the racist and sexist dress code at Brooklyn Technical High School. The dress code singles out female students for wearing clothes that are "too revealing." On May 25, to protest this policy, hundreds of students decided to break the dress code. Some coordinated online using #SkinOutSpeakOut to organize male-female and multiracial twin outfits and highlight the administration's racist and sexist enforcement of the code. Hundreds of students wore Progressive Labor Party's anti-sexism buttons to support the struggle.

Sexist, Racist Administration Exposed

When Principal Randy Asher heard about the protest and couldn't persuade students to shut it down, he called in the superintendent and sent six deans to carefully inspect all 5,500 students on their way in. Unsurprisingly, the administrators cited Black and Latin female students most for violating the dress code. (Only 16 percent of Brooklyn Tech students are Black or Latin, as compared to 69 percent in New York City public schools overall.) As a dean wrote up two female students, a male student passed them several times in short shorts and a tank top that revealed his stomach. The dean did nothing, even though the boy's clothes showed more skin than the girls'. This scene was caught on video and forced some students to open their eyes. (Later the boy was threatened with suspension for "causing a riot.")

Sexism and racism are so blatant at the elite Brooklyn Tech that one dean wrote up a Black female student and explained, "If you were an 80-pound Asian girl, this would be a different story." Dress codes teach youth that different standards prevail for men and women. They sexualize women and make female body parts "taboo." Within capitalist culture, Black and Latin women are especially sexualized and targeted.

A Principal With No Principles

Principal Asher's sexist hypocrisy has been exposed by the case of his friend Sean Shaynak, the math and physics teacher the school hired during Asher's tenure. Several years ago, according to Federal Court documents, Shaynak showed up at a school dance in drag, lifted his skirt at female students, and made "lewd and sexually suggestive gestures." Asher was present but took no disciplinary action against the teacher, who ran a prestigious aerospace program that brought significant donations to Tech (DNAinfo, 1/12/15).

For Shaynak, this was not an isolated incident. According to the federal suit brought by four former female Tech students, an assistant principal "informed principal Asher of the sexually harassing and inappropriate behavior by Shaynak," but Asher still took no action (DNAinfo). In August 2014, Shaynak was arrested after sending a female student a Snapchat photograph of his genitals. In January 2015, he was sentenced to five years in prison after pleading guilty to second-degree kidnapping, disseminating indecent material to a minor, endangering the welfare of a child and official misconduct.

When it comes to protecting his students from the dangers of sleeveless shirts, Principal Asher is a model of tough enforcement. When it comes to protecting them from sexual predators on his own turf, he's been a lot less interested and effective.

Smash Capitalism to Smash Sexism

Although sexism targets women, they cannot be the only ones to fight it. Men must join in the struggle, too; communists must explain how it is in men's best interests. Like racism, sexism is created by capitalists to steal more profit from the working class. It allows them to pay women workers less and keep men and women divided, lowering everyone's wages and blocking effective fightback. In addition, the capitalist bosses save billions of dollars in unpaid childcare and housework by women who are raising the next generation of workers. Whenever we allow sexist ideology to poison the working class, the capitalists win.

The anti-dress code struggle at Brooklyn Tech is an important battleground in our fight against capitalism. The school's students — male, female, Black, white, Latin, Asian — are uniting. They are beginning to understand the connections between racism, sexism and the profit system. When students reject these anti-worker ideologies, we move one step closer to smashing capitalism worldwide.

Overpowered Administration Responds with False Promises

The day after the dress code protest, Black female leaders organized a speakout, much like

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The Frisco500 fight against racist kkkop murders. See page 3

OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

◗ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Vietnam: Pawn of U.S. Imperialism

President Barack Obama's lifting of the arms embargo in Vietnam signifies another step toward war, particularly in the South China Sea against the Chinese bosses, one of two major threats to the U.S. imperialists.

For the working class, this strategic move by the U.S. rulers reflects the longstanding sellout politics of the Vietnamese national bosses. It also underscores the need for a worldwide revolutionary movement fighting directly for communism.

The China Factor

Lifting the embargo allows Vietnam to acquire lethal weapons from the biggest arms merchant in the world. The murderous U.S. imperialists quickly set aside their phony concerns over their new client's "disregard for human rights." On the one hand, halting the embargo will wean Vietnam away from its arms dependence on Russia, the other main imperialist rival to the U.S. On the other, the new flow of weapons will fortify Vietnam as a regional counterweight to China: "The increasingly tense situation in the South China Sea, and Vietnam's growing strategic and economic importance, outweigh U.S. concerns about Hanoi's admittedly terrible human rights record" (Council on Foreign Relations, 5/24).

For U.S. and Chinese bosses, the South China Sea represents a typical capitalist flashpoint. Both sides are attempting to justify their imperialist aggression with treaties that favor their respective empires. China's ambitious development strategy, "One Belt, One Road," seeks to expand sea and land military installations throughout Asia and the Middle East. Vietnam, a regional power and target since the Chinese first conquered it in the 1st century BC, represents a potential impediment to some of China's grand plans.

Both China and Vietnam, for example, lay claim to the Paracel Islands. In 2014, when China temporarily deployed an oil rig (a structure to drill and service oil wells) in the South China Sea, it led to multiple collisions between the two countries' ships.

Deep-Water Ports and Choke Points

The lifting of the embargo is the latest U.S. action to exploit historic tensions between Vietnam and China for its own benefit: "Above all, Washington wants greater access to Cam Ranh Bay and other strategic ports on the South China Sea" (Stratfor, 5/27). The Vietnamese port, considered the best deep-water shelter in all of Southeast Asia, has well-established strategic importance. In 1975, it was a U.S. military base during the Vietnam War. In 1979, it was an important Cold War naval base for the Russian fleet. Today, the U.S. hopes Cam Ranh Bay will provide reliable access to the South China Sea, countering China and opening the door for more military coordination with Vietnam.

In fact, Vietnam is one of several smaller countries caught up in the region's big-power conflict. Through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (a regional trade agreement excluding China), along with a recent military buildup, the U.S. is challenging China in Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia and Brunei.

Indonesia, by proxy of the United States military, controls the Malacca Strait between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra—the transit choke point for 80 percent of China's oil imports (Business Insider, 2/6). All imperialists understand that whoever controls the oil transit choke points controls the world.

The 'Final Normalization' of Imperialism

The lifting of the U.S. arms embargo represents the "final normalization" of relations between two groups of capitalist bosses that began decades ago. It's also the latest betrayal of the millions of Vietnamese workers who fought and died, in the jungles and the streets, against U.S. imperialists in the 1960s and '70s. Vietnam has pursued a capitalist market economy since 1987, when its rulers opened the country to foreign investment. In 1994, the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam was lifted. Since 1995, when President Bill Clinton restored diplomatic relations, rulers in the two countries have grown steadily closer, with a series of trade agreements and, more recently, a nuclear fuel and technology pact. In 2014, Obama began to relax the arms embargo, a move completed last month. As U.S. companies—from Chevron and Coca-Cola to Intel and Microsoft—pour money into Vietnamese factories and sweatshops, and McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts franchises sprout like weeds in Ho Chi Minh City, business is booming. In 1975, the U.S. ruling class lost the battle in Vietnam and had to beat a humiliating retreat. But today it appears to have won the imperialist war there, at least for now.

The American War

The imperialists knew they weren't fighting any ordinary enemy. A working class that arms itself with revolutionary politics and guns, with mass backing from the international masses, is more dangerous to the bosses than any imperialist rival. The U.S. bosses responded with genocide: "By the end of the war, 7 million tons of bombs had been dropped on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—more than twice the amount of bombs dropped on Europe and Asia in World War II" (Howard Zinn).

The Vietnam War (or what Vietnamese workers call "the American War") was an example of how a committed, communist-led army can defeat the largest, technology-driven imperialist army. For all of the Vietnamese communists' political weaknesses, reflecting the decay of the Soviet Union and, later, the defeat of the Cultural Revolution in China, Vietnam represented a revolutionary class war.

The leadership shown by the working class in Viet-

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All-Student Unity vs. Sexism

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the one they organized in last winter's #blackinbrooklyntech campaign (See CHALLENGE 2/10). Students spoke about getting dress-coded and targeted by the administration, and how they were routinely objectified and sexualized. Male students attacked the dress code for targeting women. The speakers pointed to the recent shift away from student passivity, and to the future of this new activism at Brooklyn Tech. Students are beginning to see sexism and racism as oppressions that stem from the capitalist profit system. Most important, the power of multiracial and male-female unity has grown stronger. That's the biggest lesson of this school year, and it has been learned by hundreds, if not thousands, of students.

Asher's administration is trying to intimidate this courageous movement by monitoring and disciplining student leaders. At the same time, the principal is attempting to pacify students with a reform "action plan." But the administrators refuse to release the action plan or do anything of substance. They're counting on the activist students graduating or losing their fighting spirit over the summer.

The Fight Continues

Seeds of resistance at Brooklyn Tech are just taking root. Since last winter, when the #blackinbrooklyntech campaign began to raise anti-racist consciousness, students have grown bolder and more confident. They are grappling with how to overcome the losing idea that fighting racism is a problem best left to Black students alone. Students who insist on expressing anti-Black racism have been marginalized. In many classrooms, teachers have taken a firm anti-racist stand. Dozens used their unassigned periods to implement plans supporting anti-racist education. Now the fight is expanding to tackle sexism and involve more of the school community. Students are already planning how to keep the struggle going next year.

There is still more work to do. More teachers and students need to be won to the fight so that it can continue for years to come. Sexism and racism must be understood as integral parts of capitalism. PL'ers are already selling CHALLENGE at Tech (see letter). Some students have come to Party study groups and May Day. As the struggle continues, we can sharpen our discussions to talk about communist revolution. The true power of student unity is felt not in struggle for reforms, but in the fight for revolution to overthrow the capitalist class. The bosses' system seeks to win over today's youth—tomorrow's workers—to accept a future of growing inequality, fascist repression and imperialist war. When young people are won to the struggle for a communist future, where there is no need for racism and sexism, larger victories lie ahead. Join the fight!✪

We'll Never Forget Shantel

Four years ago this month, Shantel Davis, 23-year-old Black woman, was brutally shot and murdered by NYPD detective "bad boy" Phillip Atkins. Shantel was at her grandmother's researching college programs just hours before.

Shantel's family, Progressive Labor Party, friends, residents, and community groups had protested in the streets every saturday for months, then every month—rain or shine. One of the chants were, "We will always remember Shantel. We'll always fight for Shantel, we'll never forget Shantel."

In the Flatbush neighborhood, we have helped build a group called "The Justice for Shantel Davis Committee," which also organizes an annual youth basketball tournament at Tilden Park.

In Shantel's name, join the four-year commemoration of her life and the antiracist, antisexist fightback that grew out of this police killing.

We are meeting at the site of the killing: E. 38 Street and Church Ave, Brooklyn, NY on Tuesday, June 14 at 7 PM.✪

From Frisco5 to 500

Take Over Intersection, Build Confidence to Fight

SAN FRANCISCO, May 31 — *"We plan on being here until we get justice or we're hospitalized," said one of the Frisco Five hunger strikers at San Francisco's Mission police station. Five brave members of the working class, women and men, started a hunger strike on April 20 in response to the viciously racist police murders in San Francisco (see box). The multi-racial group of fighters is inspiring working-class brothers and sisters to fight back against San Francisco's blatant terrorization of Black, Latin and immigrant lives. Putting actions into words the #Frisco5 bravely took over City Hall on May 6 (see CHALLENGE, 6/1). The events described here are from a PLP member whose collective organizing has helped lead to the eventual city hall shutdown. The growth of this anti-racist struggle is symbolized by the fighters' new name, #Frisco500.*

After months of working in the Mario Woods Coalition (see box noting the cop murder of Mario Woods), I got to know a few of the hunger strikers and many supporters. Based on this, the Coalition asked me to organize an action at a discussion led by kkkops Adachi and police chief Suhr. I agreed and planned on using this opportunity to organize the young people in the Coalition to lead the action — it's the youth who've been systematically excluded from leadership positions and responsibilities even though they are the spirit and bodies of the Coalition.

The meeting lasted all of two minutes and we shut it down. We went back into the streets where lots of the older "leaders" gave speech after speech, ranging from reformist "solutions" such as "not all cops are bad" to "we just need a new mayor."

The crowd was large enough to block one lane of traffic on a major street. Seeing our numbers, I proposed to some of the young organizers blocking the entire street as a symbol of our power. They agreed but wanted approval from the hunger strikers. I went to the striker who I'm closest to and asked if they'd be okay with that. They agreed, but by that time we had decided to take the entire intersection of 17th and Valencia. I made a quick speech and 100 workers and students seized the intersection, chanting, "Whose streets? OUR STREETS!" and "Black cop, white cop all the same. Racist murder is the name of their game!"

The latter chant directly opposed the misleaders' ideology about the cops "of color" and female cops not being our enemy. The Party continuously puts forward the truth about the racist history of police forces in the U.S., going back to 19th-century slave patrols, and how they serve a critical role in terrorizing, intimidating and dividing the working class for their capitalist masters.

We controlled the intersection. Many youth, particularly young women, stepped forward to lead a multitude of chants and show San Francisco the power we possess when organized. After an hour, we finally gave the street back. Young people talked about how "powerful" they felt and that "it was a part of healing" to organize the action.

Afterwards many of us decided to stay the night to provide security for the hunger strikers while they slept. On the strike line we had hours of political discussion, emphasizing the question of reform vs. revolution. I distributed 15 CHALLENGEs and introduced myself to this new group of young people as a member of PLP.

The youth would no longer be silenced. This group would become the leadership of the #Frisco500 and the seizing of City Hall.✪

Police Murders in San Francisco

KENNETH HARDING, age 19 (July 16, 2013): Multiple witness state SFPD shot Harding in the back while fleeing a transit fare evasion. Cop Richard Hastings, who received a Medal of Valor for shooting Kenneth Harding, is later arrested and charged with repeatedly molesting a 15-year-old boy.

ALEX NIETO, age 28 (March 21, 2014): The SFPD killed off-duty security guard Alex Nieto, shooting him 14 times in the head and body.

MARIO WOODS age 26 (December 2, 2015): Mario Woods had 20 gunshot wounds, including six in the back, killed by multiple SFPD officers in broad daylight.

LUIS GONGORA age 45 (April 7, 2016): Homeless immigrant Luis Gongora was shot seven times and killed within 16 seconds of contact with police.

AMILCAR PEREZ LOPEZ, age 20 (March 21, 2016): A witness statement and an autopsy report show that Perez was shot a dozen times, six from behind, four times in the back, once to the head and once in the right arm. Perez-Lopez was employed, living in a small boiler room paying $300 a month in rent.

JESSICA WILLIAMS, age 29 (May 19, 2016): A mother of five, pregnant at the time, shot and murdered by Sergeant Justin Erg.

Honey Well Bosses Say Lockout, Workers Say Fight Back

Four hundred industrial workers from the Honeywell Corporation's plants in South Bend, Indiana, and Green Island, NY, overwhelmingly rejected a company contract offer that would double their health care costs and increase the use of non-union workers. The workers make specialty aircraft wheels and brake pads for F-35 fighter planes and Boeing 747s.

Honeywell responded by locking out workers from their jobs since May 9, meaning workers aren't allowed to work until they agree to the bosses' contract proposals. Multi-billion dollar Honeywell is using scabs to replace strikers in order to maintain their super-profits on the backs of workers who are fighting to maintain basic pay and healthcare.

But workers are fighting back against Honeywell's intimidation tactics! Black, Latin and white workers from the factories and nearby regions are united and standing strong. Area workers joined the picket lines and donated food to show solidarity. What is really needed is for all workers — Black, white, union, non-union and unemployed — to unite against the capitalist scum who divide and exploit workers in order to churn out billions in profits. Strikes and pickets aren't enough to get workers their fair share because neither will destroy the profit system. Capitalists will constantly lower wages and benefits for workers. Many benefits won by strikes fifty years ago are being lost.

Since the last five-year contract, Honeywell profits increased by 152 percent while they locked out workers across the country four different times. The company invested over $27 million in the South Bend plant, making it one of its most profitable facilities. Because it successfully wrung concessions out of the United Automobile Workers union (UAW) with each negotiation and each lockout, they see no reason not to squeeze them even more.

Honeywell wants to double the cost of healthcare for workers, charging a family of four almost $7,400/year. Even worse, they want the right to increase these costs in every year of the contract. They also want to outsource more work to non-union workers while eliminating all job classifications, creating a more "flexible" workforce.

The UAW is not on the workers' side. In March, Honeywell brought the scab replacement workers into the South Bend and Green Island factories to watch the workers doing their jobs. The UAW huffed and puffed but did nothing to stop this threat. Most of these scab workers are ex-offenders and many can't find work due to the criminal Injustice System. So who is the UAW endorsing in the presidential election? The same politician who supported laws that greatly expanded that very racist system, Hillary Clinton!

UAW is also supporting a local politician and former kkkop who visited the picket lines for publicity. The police are instrumental in attacking and terrorizing striking workers. The police are not the workers' friend; yet the union continues to endorse politicians favoring the police.

It's clear that the only people who defend workers are workers themselves. We can't rely on pro-boss unions or politicians. We can't let them use racism or sexism to divide us. We can't divide ourselves from non-union workers. We're all fighting over crumbs while the capitalists devour the whole loaf! We need a communist revolution to stop all exploitation and ensure that all workers have all our needs met.

By sharpening the class war, it becomes clear that we're up against the whole racist profit system. This will help us learn how to win. We can get a taste of the power we hold in our collective hands. That's the difference between the union mis-leadership and ourselves. The capitalists have state power and use it to take back any reforms we may win. Let's organize with the Progressive Labor Party for a communist revolution!✪

Workers Shut Down France

More than 150,000 workers and youth shut down France in response to anti-working-class labor reforms. The strike is hitting the bosses where it hurts the most—their profit margin and the rise of class consciousness. Strikers have also blockaded oil refineries and shut down transportation. Half of the country's 10,000 petrol stations are either partially or completely out of fuel. Many fighters have been arrested. Protesters hurled rocks at police.

"The law eases conditions for laying off workers, strongly regulated in France. It is hoped companies will take on more people if they know they can shed jobs in case of a downturn. The law also gives employers more leeway to negotiate holidays and special leave, such as maternity or for getting married" (Nigerian Bulletin, 5/26).

Clearly, the bosses' laws can't and won't protect workers. Only the working class has the power to fight in its own interests. With communist leadership, the workers of France can turn this strike against labor reforms into a battle against capitalism.

Stand up in international solidarity for the working class of France, the birthplace of the first workers' revolutionary seizure of power, known as the Paris Commune of 1871.✪

Vietnam

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nam over decades of resistance to French, Japanese, and U.S. imperialism, inspired millions worldwide. Black soldiers shot and fragged their commanders; some joined the workers' army in Vietnam.

Back in the U.S., inner-city rebellions by Black workers were challenging the capitalists. Muhammad Ali, heavyweight boxing champion of the world, said, "I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong. No Viet Cong ever called me n-----." In 1964, a fledging group called Progressive Labor Movement, later to develop into the international Progressive Labor Party, initiated and gave leadership to what became the anti-racist movement against the Vietnam War. On May 2, thousands of workers and students marched and rallied in cities nationwide. In New York City, more than a thousand people heard PL speeches about the necessity to smash capitalism. They broke a police ban on demonstrations in midtown Manhattan, winding their way through Times Square to the United Nations, demanding: "U.S. Get Out of Vietnam Now!" It was the first national demonstration against the U.S. imperialist invasion and the forerunner of countless protests in the years ahead.

The result was the Vietnam Syndrome, the working masses' anti-imperialist sentiment resulting from fightback and anger over working-class casualties in a failed ground war. U.S. bosses have yet to recover. To this day, they've been unable to reestablish the military draft they need for the next big ground war.

The bosses are learning that military might doesn't win wars. Class commitment wins wars. If the U.S. rulers expect to counter China in the South China Sea, a possible step toward a global conflict, they must overcome the Vietnam Syndrome by feeding nationalist, racist propaganda to prepare the working class for perpetual war.

In 1968, after Ho Chi Minh and his forces first agreed to negotiations with the imperialists, the three-year-old PLP made an intensely unpopular criticism of the Vietnamese communist leaders. We said they had taken the reformist, nationalist route, selling out the international working class and any potential for communist revolution.

Nearly five decades later, history has handed down its verdict. Our Party was correct. Fighting imperialism is not enough; we must smash capitalism for all time. No longer a young organization, PLP is now an international party spanning five continents and 27 countries. We still hold high the red flag where the Vietnamese communist leadership dropped it. Soldiers, let's turn the guns around and join the fight for communism!✪

Puerto Rico's Debt: A Crisis of Finance Capitalism

NEW YORK CITY, May 14—Nearly 150 rank-and-file workers from a dozen NYC unions attended a teach-in on the massive $72 billion debt crisis in Puerto Rico. The teach-in was organized by three U.S. unions whose membership in Puerto Rico has been decimated by austerity measures — SEIU Local 32BJ, AFSCME and the UAW. Showing international working-class solidary, workers listened to the devastation unfolding on our class in Puerto Rico stemming from decades of U.S. imperialism.

The union leaders offered reformist solutions, steering away from revolution. Such devastations are inevitable under capitalism, which staggers from one economic crisis to another. For workers, communist revolution is the only road to a decent life — a life free of debt crisis, unemployment and poverty.

U.S. Imperialism at Work

Puerto Rico's debt crisis is a direct result of its long history under U.S. imperialist rule. It became a U.S colony in 1898 based on U.S. bosses' need to keep Latin America — its supposed "backyard" — under its' economic and military control. Since then, U.S. capitalist bosses has wreacked havoc on workers here, stealing profits off their labor as well as vast resources, all in the name of "democracy."

In recent years alone, U.S. companies have extracted hundreds of billions of dollars in profit from Puerto Rico. Pharmaceutical giants like Eli Lilly, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Proctor & Gamble produce 16 of their 20 top-selling U.S. drugs on the island. These companies have netted $30 billion a year in profits, but pay only four percent of that in taxes. Meanwhile, hedge funds and other investors flock to buy bonds issued by the Puerto Rican government. They pay no taxes on the interest they collect. Needless to say, Puerto Rico's workers have shouldered much of the taxes these capitalist vultures do not pay!

Given the continued exploitation by U.S. bosses, the country's economy has unsurprisingly spiraled downward, contracting an average 1.5 percent each year since 2006. Imperialist-in-chief Barack Obama and other capitalist cronies have blamed the crisis on "mismanagement" of the economy. Workers worldwide know better: the crisis is a direct result of decades of U.S. imperialism.

Workers Pay the Price

Workers in Puerto Rico bear the brunt of this exploitation. Inequality is currently higher than in any of the 50 U.S. states; 46 percent of the population lives in poverty. Per capita income is less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest state in the U.S., while food prices are often higher because 85 percent of the food is imported. One woman reported that milk is $6 a gallon!

The two major capitalist parties, the New Progressive Party and the Popular Democratic Party, have taken turns reducing pensions for government workers, increasing taxes on water and other essentials and firing thousands of public employees. One hundred schools have been closed, teachers laid off, college tuition increased, and social programs slashed. Most doctors have fled to the U.S. mainland seeking better pay and working conditions. Women and kids suffer the most under these horrible conditions. Over 80 percent of teachers are women and most have families. As is expected under capitalism, the working class in Puerto Rico and worldwide will have the burden of paying back the debts owed.

Phony Solutions

While workers are suffering, billionaire hedge-fund owners are lobbying the U.S. Congress for PROMESA, a bill which would establish an oversight panel similar to the Emergency Managers who've wrecked Detroit and Flint, Michigan, to decide what gets spent on schools, hospitals and other vital social services. These austerity measures are meant to secure the bosses' profits, not alleviate workers' conditions.

Democrats and the unions say they want to protect pensions, provide stimulus money and extend Medicare and Medicaid payments. These proposals, however, guarantee investors' profits while continuing to avoid paying taxes, the predatory practice that helped caused the crisis in the first place. If enacted, these proposals might temporarily alleviate some workers' conditions, but these "solutions" by the unions and Democrats while offering workers a material and ideological buy-in for exploitative class relations, do not get at the root of Puerto Rico's problem — the capitalist system that drives bosses to exploit workers for profits at any cost. The mis-leaders of unions and liberal parties are not our class friends.

Not surprisingly, the teach-in failed to mention workers' class struggles here against capitalist exploitation. In the last two years, teachers, students and parents have walked out of schools and marched on the government to demand an end to school closings, cuts in funding, and lowering of teacher pensions.

While strikes and walk-outs won't be nearly enough to reverse these massive bosses' attacks, they can be a learning experience in building a revolutionary communist movement that can one day overthrow the local capitalists and their imperialist masters. If anything, this teach-in showed that international solidarity among the working class is possible, and moreover is needed. In one "brain-storming" session, at the teach-in a woman's offer of "revolution" as her answer to the crisis was met with enthusiastic applause.

Only a communist revolution would ensure that the working class would no longer carry the racist, sexist burdens of capitalism.✪

Global Warming About Capitalism

Naomi Klein's most recent book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* (2014) comes at a time when the discussion of climate change and its impacts is constant and growing. Capitalists come together to make phony promises to reduce carbon emissions and slow the climate shifts while perpetuating the myth that individual workers are responsible for the condition of the planet.

Klein's book has become something of a "bible" for the movement against anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming (AGW). Klein appears to attack the economic system as a whole. It's a well-written book, but at the same time a very bad book—good on describing the problem but bad on providing a real solution.

Klein makes some good points: she describes the consequences of AGW, including extreme weather events, flooding, wildfires, heat waves, and sea level rise, and she explains why poor Black, Latin, Asian, and immigrant workers of the world are hurt the most. Klein explained that burning coal, oil, and natural gas is currently the main cause of AGW and that huge corporations (e.g., ExxonMobil) profit while the rest of us suffer the consequences. She relates AGW to surface features of capitalism, including, perhaps the most useful, how the laws passed to facilitate global world trade directly prevent any government from lessening AGW.

Capitalism Fuels Global Warming

Among solutions, Klein promotes mass organization as the way to fight AGW by trying to force all governments to end AGW and lessen its devastations. But the mass organizing she proposes is to reform capitalism, implying that capitalism could be made to be more environmentally friendly. Nothing could be further from the truth. Capitalism, by its very nature will always put the ruling class's profit and power over the long-term health and wellbeing of the planet and the working class.

It is because of the super-exploitation, lacking healthcare, profit-driven utilities, extreme homelessness, and

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Communists at the Left Forum

NEW YORK CITY, May 22— At the opening event of this year's Left Forum at John Jay College, Progressive Labor Party distributed a flyer calling out one of the keynote speakers, journalist, minister, and fake leftist Chris Hedges. Its headline read:

Chris Hedges: 'It is not our job to take power' (Seattle, 4/25/16).

Progressive Labor Party: 'The Job Of The Working Class Is To Take Power!'

Hedges is just another faker posing as a revolutionary. He likes to pretend that he speaks for all the revolutionaries in "our" movement, and PLP was there to expose him for the fraud he is. Well, our flyer sure got under his skin. In front of an audience of over 1,000 students, youth and labor organizers, the very first words out of his mouth were to tell the audience that our flyer had quoted him "out of context." He then tried to clarify himself by saying "our main job is to scare those in power." All he really clarified was his own job – to be a wolf in sheep's clothing! Fake revolutionaries like Chris Hedges, Noam Chomsky, Slavoj Zizek and these other self-described "revolutionaries" are anti-communists promoted by the capitalist class to mislead the working class, especially students and youth.

PL'ers called on the attendees to dump clowns like Hedges and build for a real solution: that only the unity of the working class and a communist revolution to take power from the capitalist class will end the horrors from which workers around the world suffer today.

Opportunity Amid Liberal Swamp

The Left Forum (LF) is an annual three-day meeting in New York City. Its leadership is a combination of revisionists, Democrats and other liberals who want to win young people to believe that capitalism can be changed from within.

However, not all the young people at the LF bought these lies. They see that the super-rich are getting richer and even more powerful; that jobs are nonexistent or pay so little that even full-time employment won't pay the rent; that racism, sexism, nationalism, and wars are growing more brutal by the day. Many are getting fed-up with all of this and are looking for a way to make a real change. PLP was present to meet and engage with the thousands of workers and working class youth who attended the weekend event.

This year, the Progressive Labor Party had a literature table there. We sold hundreds of CHALLENGEs and other literature, and had stimulating discussions. Many mostly-young people came by to see our literature and to talk. While many who joined our oftentimes-passionate discussions didn't agree with much of our line (or our criticisms of fakers like Chris Hedges), it was also the first time that they had been exposed to revolutionary communist politics. They want real change. We received some contacts. We will try to win them to see that communist revolution is necessary and possible, and that building for revolution requires being part of the fight now against racism, sexism and imperialism.

This weekend proved beyond a doubt that workers and youth are hungry for ideas and open to communism—the struggle continues to expose the bosses' misleaders and build a mass revolutionary PLP that can wage communist revolution and rid the world of capitalism. Onward!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Organize Anti-Sexist Struggle in Schools

I distributed CHALLENGE and anti-sexism buttons at Brooklyn Tech in support of the anti-sexist student struggle against dress codes (see page 1). Within 45 minutes, we had run out of all 150 newspapers and all 200 buttons! My comrade and I received many positive responses, and some students wanted to take extra buttons to give to their friends.

Sometimes it's tough to get out of bed so early, but it's always worth it because everywhere the Party goes, we get overwhelming support from fellow anti-sexist and anti-racist students and workers.

Getting out our politics in schools is important because it is where future workers are won to sexist, racist, and elitist capitalist ideologies. This is especially at Brooklyn Tech where students are groomed to be the next generation of doctors, scientists, and politicians. Capitalists try to win these students to work to support the system. They need to make students believe that they are not a part of the working class and that they don't need to fight sexism or racism. It's critical to win students to fight capitalism and to use their vast wealth of knowledge to serve the working class.

Whenever students take a stand against these divisive ideologies, the Party must be there to support the fight, sharpen the struggle, and fight for revolution. Students at Brooklyn Tech are eager to fight sexism and racism, and now it is our job to draw the communist connections.

To destroy sexism, we must do more than fight dress codes. We must fight for communist revolution. These students are already fighting back with courage and we must have confidence that the working class will understand and fight for communist ideas. Hundreds of students today just proved that. If you haven't had a CHALLENGE sale in a while, grab a buddy and a bundle, and see what happens!

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Picketing Against Racism

The kkkop Edward Nero who murdered Freddie Gray was found not guilty on all charges. In response, fifteen communists gathered on our regular street corner in Brooklyn,NY to respond to this blatantly racist injustice. At first, we were just passing out CHALLENGEs and talking to workers about police terror and the racist capitalist system that creates it. Some of us were reluctant to do our chants and have a picket without a bullhorn. However, after some young comrades struggled for a picket, we all gathered and started chanting, "Racism means we got to fight back!"

Immediately, workers began to ask us questions and seek out the paper. I had been frustrated earlier because not many people were taking CHALLENGE. Much to my excitement, people who had refused the paper before we started chanting came back to me and asked for one. With persistence and boldness, we ended up getting out more than 400 CHALLENGEs. It reminded me that we should never be afraid to be bold and that even if we don't have a bullhorn, we can still have our voices heard. When we are unapologetically antiracist, workers respond with raised fists.

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May Day Play: Cascarones at Politicians

We celebrated this year's May Day in Texas with a barbecue. We invited comrades, family, and friends. We opened with a speech about the history of May Day and the struggles of the working-class all over the world, and PLP's role in understanding the world today. Then moved into our play that described how both US parties; democrat and republican, are not answers to the caused by capitalism. We had caricatures of the presidential candidates Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. A pie chart showing the profits of other imperialist countries' and how each candidate proposes to steal from different groups of workers and supports imperialist wars aboard.

It the end the ballot box turned into a tank driven by the three candidates. As this happen the audience members had an active role in throwing cascarones at the tank, symbolizing our fight back against capitalism.

It was a creative way to talk about the current elections. After the play, we closed with a speech about the Progressive Labor Party. Our celebration was a big success and a lot of fun.

May Day: Don't Vote, Organize!

"Are you angry about racism? Sexism? War?" asked the keynote speaker at our annual May Day Dinner. The audience enthusiastically responded "Yeah!" Seventy-five people of all races and ages, (not including many adorable children running around) attended the Progressive Labor Party's May Day Dinner in Chicago this year. Although it was a cold, rainy day, the atmosphere inside the dinner was warm and welcoming. There was delicious, home-cooked food, and inspiring posters hung on the wall. A professional sound system, donated and operated by a friend of PL, was set-up for the evening's songs and speeches. In the outer room from the dining area, art supplies were set up for the kids to enjoy. Everyone was welcomed warmly and chatting happily while we ate.

The program opened with a welcome and then singing "Bella Ciao." The theme of the dinner was "Don't Vote! Organize for Communist Revolution!" and many of the talks discussed this idea. A Chicago Teacher's Union (CTU) member discussed the difference between the union perspective and the communist analysis PLP provides. We watched a video of our comrades in California share the story of their recent battle with the KKK in Anaheim (see CHALLENGE, 3/10). We "passed the hat," and everyone donated money for the Anaheim rebels' court costs. We also did a "table talk," where a question about experienced racism was posed to the audience and then we all discussed this at our tables with the people around us. We then shared what we discussed at the microphone.

Our main speech addressed why we need more people to join PLP. The speaker was a woman healthcare worker who cares for veterans. She addressed the ways that imperialist war has impacted their lives. Racism and poverty have also hurt these men and she made the connection between the wars they fought in with capitalism, imperialism, and racism. Addressing the question of why some people who agree with the Party politically may be reluctant to join, she emphasized the need for revolutionary violence over voting for a friendlier-faced liberal capitalist. The speaker also addressed the cynicism around the possibility of building a mass revolutionary working class movement through the examples of previous successful revolutions. The speaker concluded saying that learning from history and talking to your comrades are some ways to combat pessimism, but it's even better to participate in class struggle and join PLP. Struggle builds our trust and confidence in the working class to change the world.

May Day is about celebrating working class fightback and we've had a lot of that in Chicago this past year! Chicago PL'ers went to the BLM conference in Cleveland to put forth multi-racial unity instead of nationalism and segregation. We participated in events around the 43 missing students from Ayotzinapa when their caravan came to Chicago. We went to Ferguson to demonstrate on the one-year anniversary of the murder of Mike Brown with the courageous fighters there, and then we went to NYC and celebrated 50 years of our party! We marched in the streets when the video of Laquan McDonald's murder was released. And a few days later we marched in the Black Friday protest, shutting down the Magnificent Mile with workers and students of all races. When Donald Trump came to have a rally at UIC, even though we know "It's not just Trump, it's capitalism," we joined with thousands of students and workers to protest and kept him from speaking. We were part of the one-day Chicago Teacher's strike—and we'll be there when they go on strike again for our kids and our class! When the police murdered 17-year-old Pierre Loury one month ago while he was fleeing, climbing a fence, we were there to protest with hundreds in his community. PLP was there because we know that being shoulder-to-shoulder with our brothers and sisters in the working class, engaged in struggle, is the only way we will build a party that can take on the capitalist class. And taking on the capitalist class in an armed revolution is the only way we can start to build a world that will truly serve the working class. The only solution is communist revolution!

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May Day Reflections

In the San Francisco Bay Area, we collectively planned our pre-May Day March activity to really reach out to everyone. We teamed up and went around a public plaza here, talking to people, distributing our on-point color PLP flyer and CHALLENGE-DESAFIO newspapers while asking for donations. There was the usual Sunday crowd of people shopping, coming to and from places on BART and people arriving for the rally and march. We sold about 75 CHALLENGES and distributed 500 flyers. We got some contacts

In the march, we lead very militant and classic PLP chants the entire way.

We waved awesome PLP flags and with other comrades held our banner with an image of a giant fist smashing a cop car. Our Chants and other banners addressed International Workers Unity and the Fight for Communism.

Finally, I took a try at leading chants and did my best. I need more practice figuring out the rhythms and especially practicing the Spanish chants. I tried to speak a little before a couple of the chants to explain our rhymes and talk to those around us in the march. Even though I have performed and rapped many times in front of all types of crowds, actually figuring out the dynamics of a moving political march will take some time. Perhaps we need more rallies to develop all our skills.

I think we represented well with a multi-racial group of men and women and all generations taking turns on the mic. We had people, especially the march security, smiling and chanting with us, each time we lead a chant.

Our crew had a well-deserved late lunch as we heard news that the Warriors had crushed the Portland Trail Blazers. Just as Golden State has proven their ability to play unselfishly and utilize the team, PLP is shaping up in the SF Bay Area to do the same, except not for capitalist owners but for all the workers. We have a way to go, but we continue to smash borders between age, gender, skin color, language, personal obligations, while committing to our obligations to the working class! Boom shakalaka! In yo face fascist chumps! "We go-in' fo da win!!!

This year we planned a new approach to involving those who came with informal political discussions. We organized ahead to have "Table Talk" subjects and "break out reports." The table talks about racism and fight back that people have seen this year really brought the tables to life and opened up conversations that may not have otherwise happened because people are either too shy or unsure of who's who to say something. The fight against racism is a sure way to solidify our class and bring forward more workers.

The LA comrades shared their amazing story of fighting the Klan in Anaheim earlier this year and how they were abused by "the pigs" who meanwhile protected and were chummy with the KKK.

The talks, poetry, and music, as well as chants in between, really perked up the event. This should remind us that only reading and writing is not the only way to appeal to our class. All forms of culture must be taken back from the thieving capitalists. They have succeeded in making so much of our cultural outlets into commodities and our art just another way to profit. In my grandfather's family (15 siblings) all knew how to sing and play music on some or several instruments—what has happened? We need to be sure not to underestimate the power of art as a tool to teach, share and inform—it is much older than the written word and still captivates workers. As a rapper in the 90's once said: "Hiphop outsold crack."

The after party was great, too, and a chance to have deeper conversations. I hope we will continue to have more dinners though the year. People came who I didn't expect and some didn't show up, and I'll be sure to follow-up with asking those who did show up about why they decided to come.

Salutes to all the comrades, families, friends and all the support from each worker who contributed.

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My First May Day Dinner

This was my first visit to May Day Dinner. I liked hearing the history about what happened to workers in the past, how people suffered and how May Day came up. I liked hearing many individual life experiences. It was a warm and passionate event. The dinner was delicious. Robotic Rap was awesome.

Thank you guys!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This Changes Nothing: Climate Change Inevitable Under Capitalism

continued from page 5

horrendous living conditions that capitalism forces our working class brothers and sisters into that the devastating effects of climate change will always fall most extremely on the working class.

In India, an extreme heatwave in 2015 left at least 2,500 of the poorest members of the working class dead.

Drought and rising temperatures across southern and eastern Africa leave the working class there vulnerable, with nearly 16 million people already going hungry and "more than 40 million rural and 9 million poor urban people at risk [of going hungry]" (The Guardian, 3/16).

In Ethiopia in particular, it is predicted that 2 million children will need to be treated for malnutrition, 10 million people will need food aid, and 3.9 million children will have their education interrupted (Guardian, 3/16).

These attacks are part and parcel of capitalism—no amount of laws or reforms will change the exploitative and deadly essence. And this is how the book fails. First, Klein mistakes the appearance of capitalism for its true essence. She attacks deregulated free-market capitalism, advocating a change in the form of the system, in which government intervention force fossil fuel companies to shut down.

Only communist revolution is a solution, in fact the only solution, to AGW. A world run by the working class would make wholesale shifts in production, prioritizing the needs of the working class and the need for a healthy planet.

Under capitalism, the main ideology—the ideas that are allowed to grow and spread—are limited to the ones that do not threaten the capitalists' position. Those that do threaten, such as the idea that the world's workers need revolution and communism, are outlawed and repressed. Klein repeatedly says that if only the government and corporations would shed their belief in free-market and other aspects of capitalist ideology, we could solve the problem. She ignores the source of these ideas and that they are critical to the ruling class maintaining profit.

A serious weakness of Klein's analysis, and those of other liberal misleaders is the belief that the right politicians can be convinced or pressured to force the big corporations to get in line. This is not how capitalism works. The state (the government) is the instrument of outlawing and repression, through legislatures, cops, courts, prisons, and the military.

Contrary to Klein's misleading analysis, the bosses maintain power through the state. Legislation and courts function in their interest. She does correctly point out that mass movements have occasionally extracted concessions from the state and its rulers—concessions that are always temporary and are often followed by increased repression of the working class (for example, the use of the "War on Drugs" and mass incarceration to attack the working class in response to the Black-led worker rebellions of the 1960s and 1970s). But these occasional concessions lead her to conclude that sheer numbers enable us to use the state against the capitalists.

The reality is that neither persuasion nor voting majorities count. The state embodies sheer force and violence to protect the class interests of the rulers. It cannot be turned to our use against the rulers, but rather requires our gathering sufficient unity and numbers to physically overpower and demolish the capitalist state, and construct in its place a worker-controlled state with a completely different form of organization—communism!

For the world's working class to end AGW and to improve our position permanently, it requires us to engage in armed revolution. Mass movements within

the confines of capitalist rules and laws are relatively impotent. Yes, let us organize within these mass organizations—for communist politics.

Capitalism, its rulers, and their state must be abolished for the working class to win any permanent gains—including the abolition of capitalist-fostered racism, sexism, and nationalism.

Communist philosophy provides the only guidelines to evaluate the real world and arrive at valid answers. Klein raises many useful ideas as to the science of what needs to be done to stop AGW, but misses the point entirely about how to bring these ideas to fruition—not just a change of form, but the overthrow of capitalism altogether, and the development of a worker-run communist society.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Liberal racist Democrats set up mass imprisonment

GW (book review), 3/13 — …the mass incarceration and policing of African Americans in the U.S. was conceived…by…Democrats….To understand why police kill people daily and why there are about a million black faces behind bars in the U.S., you need to look…at the liberal lions John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson….

…Elizabeth Hinton's…new history "From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: the Making of Mass Incarceration in America,"….sketches how free black people have been systematically shut out of American opportunity since slavery. By the 1890 census, blacks formed 12% of American society and 30% of its prisoners — and that overrepresentation only increased by the mid-20th century…. "unemployment rates of African Americans were more than double their white counterparts" — similar to…today.

Liberalism failed to target the economic inequalities wrought by decades of systemic racism….The Kennedy administration began pinning the scourges of poverty and racism on troubled kids. Kennedy's social policies…called for the creation of punitive juvenile detention centers….

…Liberalism's answer to what William E.B. Dubois famously called the "problem of the color line" was not to redress African-American injustice….Titans of liberalism….gave us expanded surveillance and…[the] present carceral nightmare instead.

Ramp up deportations of moms, kids

NYT, 5/14 — …The Obama administration is moving ahead with a surge of deportations…aimed mainly at mothers and children from Central America…

Over one weekend in January,…about 120 women and children were detained for deportation…. [but now] immigration agents will speed up the arrests of individual families, which they have been making nationwide since the January raids….

…Agents also will arrest migrants who came when they were minors but turned 18 while fighting deportation in the courts, making them ineligible for protection as children….

…Apprehension of families…from October 2015 to March increased 131 percent over the same six-month period a year earlier…while the detention of unaccompanied children increase 78 percent to 27,754….

…The vast majority went to court — 86 percent…— without lawyers. Court records show that asylum seekers have a very low rate of success without lawyers.

Deadly 'care' for immigrant detainees reaps huge profits

NYT, 5/12 — Nelson Fernandez and his daughter…were still asleep when….armed agents swarmed through their small Manhattan apartment…taking away her father, who is disabled by a rare autoimmune disorder and dependent on blood thinners to prevent fatal blood clots.

Mr. Fernandez, a legal permanent resident for 26 years, suddenly was facing deportation to the Dominican Republic….Unable to contact his family, he was soon bleeding internally and pleading for medical care.

Mr. Fernandez's case is one of…a pattern of substandard medical care….at the private…provider at the Hudson [N.J.] jail, CFG Health Systems…seeking a five-year contract renewal at a cost of $29.4 million….

Other cases…include a Queens man with a brain tumor taken into custody before his scheduled surgery, who suffered worsening headaches, dizziness and seizures for nearly four months. The man, Claude Dor, now fighting deportation to Haiti, said…jail health care employees denied him the medication he had been taking to shrink the tumor….

…The immigration detention system,…a hodgepodge of local jails and for-profit prisons [harbors] substandard medical care that sometimes end[s] in detainees' deaths.

One detainee filed multiple requests for specialty care, to no avail. When…taken to his court hearing…he was so weak and short of breath that the judge called 9-1-1 so he could be taken to the hospital….Doctors discovered …he had a pacemaker with a battery that needed immediate replacement….

In Mr. Fernandez's case,…doctors told him he had a blood clot near his heart….The agency's response to an emergency complaint…was to speed up his deportation….

Unsafe Texas plant killed 15: 'A preventable disaster'

NYT, 5/12 — The fire that set off one of the worst industrial disasters in Texas history — the deadly explosion of a fertilizer plant in West, Texas, that killed 15 people — was intentionally set….

…More than 260 others were injured….Of the town's 700 homes,…193…were destroyed or severely damaged…[as well as] three schools, a nursing home and a 50-unit apartment complex….

Officials described it as preventable disaster, noting a lack of oversight and regulations, and shortcomings in how the company handled the fertilizer.

Trump's expertise: cuts in jobs, health care and home foreclosures

NYT, 5/16 — Atlantic City — As a cocktail waitress for 27 years in this city's…casino industry, Valerie McMorris learned the hard way that Donald Trump's art of the deal too often proved the art of the bankruptcy. "I've been through three bankruptcies" she said…[as] Trump hurried to remove "TRUMP" from the facades of suddenly failing casinos, lest they undermine his claims to financial invincibility….

Across the city casino workers have lost pensions and health care in bankruptcy proceedings…with thousands of jobs lost. Home foreclosures are multiplying….

…The Trump Taj Mahal…has been keeping the casino afloat since it filed for bankruptcy…by eliminating union benefits.

HIROSHIMA LIES

Hypocrite-in-chief Barack Obama concluded his visit to Japan with no apology for the most deadly terrorist slaughter in the history of the world, the 1945 U.S. atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Instead, he called for a "moral awakening" and "a world free of nuclear weapons." He laid a wreath. He embraced survivors of the racist atrocities that murdered more than 200,000 women, men and children, the vast majority of them civilians burned to death. Whenever the imperialists fight, it's always the working class that suffers the bloody horrors.

But actions speak louder than words. In response to the sharpening inter-imperialist competition between the U.S. bosses and their capitalist counterparts in Russia and China, Obama has engineered "a $1 trillion program to rebuild the American nuclear arsenal over the next 30 years. A new Pentagon report shows that he has eliminated fewer nuclear weapons than any president since the end of the Cold War" (New York Times, 5/28). In particular, the recent development of smaller—and therefore more usable—nuclear weapons by "an economically declining Russia, a rising China and an uncertain United States… threaten[s] to revive a Cold War-era arms race…" (NYT, 4/16).

Joining Obama at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was Shinzo Abe, Japan's hard-right prime minister, who led a successful 2015 campaign—backed by the U.S.—to "re-interpret" the country's pacifist postwar constitution and free its "Self-Defense Forces" to engage in overseas combat. Obama's pivot to Asia is heavily tilting toward a remilitarized Japan as a once-and-future regional counterweight to China. As a former Japanese Foreign Ministry official observed, "Abe's approach is a kind of 'military pacifism' that takes war as a given" (NYT, 5/27).

When the rulers talk of peace, as Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht once noted, the workers know that war has already begun. The lesson of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is that the U.S. ruling class will stop at nothing to preserve its state power and profit. Which means the next world war is only a matter of time.

Workers protests U.S. President Obama's recent visit at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima.

Bombing Japan to Save It—for U.S. Imperialism

For seven decades, U.S rulers have tried to justify the A-bomb attacks by maintaining they were needed to force Japan's surrender and avoid a U.S. land invasion and a million U.S. casualties. In reality, Japan's rulers were ready to surrender *before* Hiroshima:

• According to the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, a board of military and civilian experts established by U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, "Certainly…in all probability prior to November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bomb had not been dropped… and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated." Hiroshima Lies

• A million lives were not saved. Indeed, McGeorge Bundy, later the U.S. National Security Adviser, "confessed that he had pulled it out of the air to justify the bombings" (8/5/2005).

• By the spring of 1945, Japan's entire industrial and military machine had ground to a halt, severing its oil lifeline. By June, U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay complained that there was nothing left to bomb in Japanese cities except "garbage can targets."

• The arch-racist Truman's diary referred to a decoded Japanese cable indicating Japan was about to surrender unconditionally, as "the Jap[anese] Emperor [was] asking for peace."

• General (and future president) Dwight Eisenhower believed that Japan "was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary…and no longer mandatory to save American lives" (Eisenhower: Mandate for Change, 1963).

• General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Pacific commander, considered the A-bombs "completely unnecessary from a military point of view" (James Clayton, "The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945," Vol. II).

A Genocide Aimed at USSR

If overwhelming evidence shows that the genocide at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was militarily unnecessary, and that Japan was on the verge of unconditional surrender, why did President Harry Truman order the A-bombs dropped? The true purpose was to warn the then-socialist Soviet Union that the U.S. had a new and devastating weapon, and was ready to use it against any threat to the U.S. imperialists' world dominance. The obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki signaled the beginning of the Cold War between capitalists in the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Some supporting evidence:

• On June 6, 1945, Stimson told Truman he was "fearful" that the U.S. Air Force would have Japan "so bombed out" that the A-Bomb "would not have a fair background to show its strength."

• With the Soviet Red Army ready to enter the war against Japan by August 8, the U.S. rushed to use the bomb two days earlier, to play what Stimson referred to as a "master card": "Let our actions speak for words. The Russians will understand them better than anything else….We have to regain the lead…in a pretty rough and realistic way….We have coming into action a weapon which will be unique" (Stimson diary).

• James Byrnes, Truman's secretary of state, told Stimson, "The atomic bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war" (Truman: Year of Decisions).

As A-bomb scientist Leo Szilard, in a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes, recalled:

> *Mr. Byrnes did not argue that it was necessary to use the bomb…in order to win the war….Mr. Byrnes's….view [was] that our possessing and demonstrating the bomb would make Russia more manageable in Europe.*
>
> —A Personal History of the Atomic Bomb, Leo Szilard, 1949.

In an implicit indictment of the liberal Democrat Truman administration, Szilard said, "If the Germans had dropped atomic bombs on cities… we would have defined [it]…as a war crime, and we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremburg and hanged them."

In this era of a U.S. "war on terror" and Obama's bald-faced lies about eliminating nuclear weapons, it's important to remember that he represents the capitalist class that stands guilty of the genocide in Japan. To this day, only the U. S. rulers have used nuclear weapons in war. It remains for the international working class to mete out justice to the most murderous criminals the world has ever known.✪

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